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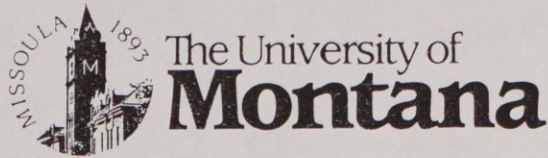
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NEWS RELEASE

April 11, 2003

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UM EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED FOR GOOD COOKING

MISSOULA-

There are many reasons the food at The University of Montana tastes so good -- Sandi Robinson and Tom Siegel are two of them, and they were recently recognized for their culinary talent and expertise.

Robinson is the most recent University Dining Services employee to receive certification by the American Culinary Federation, and is now a certified sous chef. A UDS employee since 1981, Robinson currently is the sous chef in the University Center cash operations kitchen. She already is well-known on campus for her self-branded "Sandi's Soups" line, available at the UC Food Court. The soups are the result of her extensive knowledge and professional work experience.

Siegel, UDS executive chef, was awarded a bronze medal at the 2003 National Association of College and University Food Services Region VIII Culinary Challenge. For the competition, which is sanctioned by ACF, Siegel and the other contestants each were given 60 minutes to produce four portions of a creative beef tenderloin entree with as many as two side dishes. The finished product was judged by three certified executive chefs based on taste, the chef's demonstrated cooking skills, knife-handling, culinary techniques, organization and sanitation principles.

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In preparation for the competition, Siegel created an original entree, repeatedly tested the dish and made modifications. He fully prepared the dish more than 10 times, simulating the competition conditions as closely as possible. Four of the practice sessions were performed at UM in front of a live audience and mock judges.

“In practice I had developed some techniques to stay within the one-hour time limit,” said Siegel, “But in the heat of the competition, I ran over by 30 seconds. You practice and practice and practice, but you can never really simulate the conditions of a real competition. Everything moves a little faster.”

The extra 30 seconds cost Siegel 1.5 points and the silver medal. But he said he’s not disappointed with the bronze. “All the activities you do to prepare for an event -- the flavor profiles, history, testing, timed trials -- they all help to make me a better competitor and a better chef. That is the real goal.”

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